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DRAFT NIE #3/1

SOVIET CAPABILITIES AND INTENTIONS

THE PROBLEM

To estimate Soviet capabilities and intentions with particular reference to the imminence of general war.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The rulers of the USSR, in driving toward their ultimate objective of establishing a worldwide group of Communist societies under the control of the USSR, are currently concentrating on the intermediate aims of preventing the deployment in Europe of forces capable of threatening the Soviet position there, eliminating the influence of the US and its allies from Asia, and weakening the non-Soviet world in general.

2. On the basis of intelligence presently available it is impossible to determine whether in fact Soviet rulers have or have not decided to precipitate global war.

3. Soviet rulers may reach a deliberate decision to precipitate a general war within the next year or two, basing this decision on an estimate that:

a. The present move of the North Atlantic Treaty countries to gear an increasing proportion of their industries to armaments production would cause a critical decline in the relative superiority of Soviet military strength-in-readiness during 1951 and 1952; and that

b. the USSR, because of its present superior strength-in-readiness and because its political system permits the use of a relatively large proportion of the national gross economic product for military purposes, might be

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able to equal the US and its allies in economic output in direct support of military operations for a considerable period of time during the next year or two; and perhaps that

c. the USSR has the capability of delivering a quick, decisive atomic attack that would neutralize US retaliatory atomic facilities and prevent US mobilization of its superior total power-potential.

4. Despite the factors tending to impel Soviet rulers to deliberate precipitation of general war, currently available evidence suggests that the USSR has little reason to be pessimistic about political gains by short-of-war methods in the immediate future. It also suggests that there are good reasons to doubt whether the USSR could win a general war if it began in the next year or two, mainly because of the superior US capability of mounting long-range atomic air attacks and the peculiar vulnerability to atomic attack of the highly centralized government-control system of the USSR. On the basis of this evidence, it is estimated that it is probably not now in the best interests of the rulers of the USSR and is probably not now their intention deliberately to resort to general war.

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5. Regardless of what their intentions may be with respect to precipitating general war, Soviet rulers are pursuing and probably will continue to pursue aggressively their worldwide attack on the power position of the US and its allies regardless of the possibility that general war may result. Further direct or indirect Soviet acts of aggression in Europe and Asia are likely. In these circumstances, whatever Soviet intentions may be, there is a grave danger

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of the outbreak of general war as a result of the reaction of the US and its
allies to Soviet impingement on interests vital to their security.

*prefer to
avoid US
counteraction*

iii

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